

In the Claims:

Please replace the prior listing of claims with the following listing:

1 (Currently amended) Restraining-apparatus for coupling at least two users comprising at least one spine member with first and second nodes connected to the spine member at opposite ends of the spine member, each of the first and second nodes having first and second ends, and having connection devices for connecting and disconnecting a respective spine member at each end of the node, each node having at least one at least two lateral attachment members member releasably coupled to each node, each lateral attachment member being adapted to couple ~~respective first and second users to a~~ respective user to a node of the spine member, the spine member having a first vertical plane, and a second lateral plane, the spine member having a stiffening member to enhance rigidity in said first vertical plane, whereby the spine member is rigid in said vertical plane but wherein the spine member has a higher degree of flexibility in said lateral plane than in said vertical plane, the apparatus having a releasable fastener device for coupling each user to a respective attachment member, wherein each releasable fastener device is coupled to a respective lateral attachment member on each of the nodes.

2 (Currently amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, where ~~the~~ each spine member is an elongate member selected from the group consisting of a rod and a plate-from which the lateral attachment members extend sideways from each side of the each spine member.

3 (Currently amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ each spine member is inextensible along its long axis.

4 (Currently amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ each spine member has a degree of lateral resilience.

5 (Currently amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the each spine member is at least partially formed from a material selected from the group comprising plastics material, composite material, and resilient materials.

6 (Cancelled).

7 (Previously presented) Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the stiffening member is at least partially formed from a material selected from the group consisting of plastics, metals and composite materials.

8 (Cancelled)

9 (Currently amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 8 1, wherein the attachment members comprise elongate arms extending laterally from the each spine member.

10 (Currently amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 9 1, wherein the arms have properties selected from the group consisting of flexibility, axial extensibility, and compressibility.

11 (Currently amended) ~~Apparatus as claimed in claim 10,~~ Restraining apparatus for coupling at least two users comprising at least one spine member with at least two lateral attachment members adapted to couple respective first and second users to the spine member, the spine member having a first vertical plane, and a second lateral plane, the spine member having a stiffening member to enhance rigidity in said first vertical plane, whereby the spine member is rigid in said vertical plane but wherein the spine member has a higher degree of flexibility in said lateral plane than in said vertical plane, the apparatus having a releasable fastener device for coupling each user to a respective attachment member, wherein the attachment members comprise elongate arms extending laterally from the spine member and releasably secured thereto, and ~~wherein the arms are pivotable with respect pivotally attached to each arm is adapted to rotate around an axis passing through~~ the spine member.

12 (Previously presented) Apparatus as claimed in claim 11, wherein at least two arms are provided and said at least two arms are pivotable with respect to each other.

13 (Currently amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 8 1, wherein the attachment members are rigid, and wherein respective attachment members extend from different sides of the spine member.

14 (Currently amended) Apparatus as claimed in claim 8 1, wherein attachment members are staggered along the spine member.

15 (Previously presented) Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, including harnesses worn by each user and wherein the attachment members are adapted to attach to the harnesses.

16 (Original) Apparatus as claimed in claim 15, wherein the attachment members are adapted to attach releasably to the harnesses.

17 (Previously presented) Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, incorporating luminous, reflective and/or light emitting devices.

18 (Currently amended) A method of securing or restraining at least two users together, comprising harnessing each of the users to a common spine member via an respective attachment member, the apparatus having a releasable fastener device for coupling each user to a respective attachment member, the spine member having first and second nodes connected to the spine member at opposite ends of the spine member, each of the first and second nodes having first and second ends, and having connection devices for connecting and disconnecting a respective spine member at each end of the node, each node having at least one attachment member releasably coupled to each node, each lateral attachment member being adapted to couple a respective user to a node of the spine member, each spine member having a first vertical plane, and a second lateral plane, the spine member having and a stiffening member to enhance rigidity in said first vertical plane, whereby the each spine member is rigid in said vertical plane but wherein the each spine member has a higher degree of flexibility in said lateral plane than in said vertical plane,

and wherein each user is harnessed to a respective attachment member via the releasable fastener device.

19 (Cancelled).

20 (Previously presented) Restraining apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the releasable fastener comprises a male portion with a projecting part, and a female portion with a socket, wherein the projecting part of the male portion couples with the socket on the female portion, thereby releasably fastening the two portions together.

21 (Previously presented) Restraining apparatus as claimed in claim 20, wherein the releasable fastener comprises a resilient locking device resisting disconnection of the two portions from one another.

22 Cancelled.

23 Cancelled.

24 (New) Restraining-apparatus for coupling at least two users comprising
at least one spine member having a first end and a second end, and having a first vertical plane,
and a second lateral plane;
at least two rigid attachment arms,

wherein each of the rigid attachment arms is releasably connected to the spine member,

wherein each rigid attachment arm extends from the spine member in a substantially straight line and in a direction that is substantially perpendicular to the spine member, whereby the rigid attachment arm is maintained in the second lateral plane of the spine member;

and wherein each rigid attachment arm terminates in a free end spaced away from the spine member in the second lateral plane of the spine member, and wherein the free end of each arm has a releasable fastener device adapted to releasably couple said first and second users to said free ends of respective rigid attachment members,

the spine member having a stiffening member extending substantially along the length of the spine member between the first and second ends thereof, whereby the stiffening member maintains rigidity of the spine member along its length in said vertical plane but wherein the stiffening member is adapted to permit lateral movement of the spine member in said lateral plane.